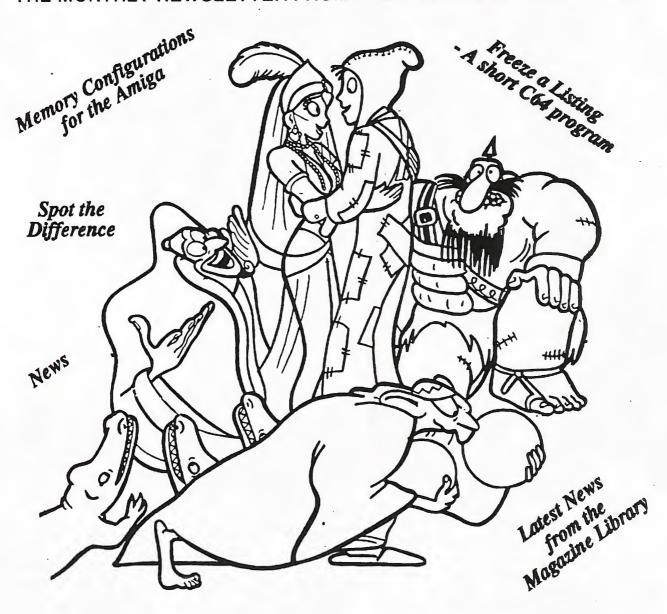
MCCC NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE FAMILY COMPUTER CLUB



Melbourne Commodore Computer Club Inc.

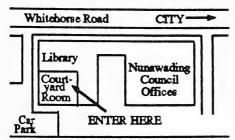
AUGUST 1994

VIC 20 C16 PLUS 4 C64 C128 AMIGA



P.O. Box 177, Box Hill, Vic. 3128.

Club meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Nunawading Civic Centre in the Courtyard Room.



Meetings begin at 7.30 p.m. Please make an effort to arrive on time so the meeting can begin with no delays.

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All opinions expressed are those of the authors of individual articles and not necessarily those of the MCCC Inc.

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Telephone (03) 725-0682
Articles for the newsletter may
be hardcopy (handwritten is
equally acceptable), C64 or
Amiga disk. All club members
are invited to submit articles.

Secretary:
Robert Morrow
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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE 2nd September, 1994.

In this Issue....

Page 3 The Editor's Bytes

Page 4 Programming - Freeze a Listing (C64)

Page 4 Dealer Directory

Page 5 A Chat with the President

Page 6 Spot the Difference Page 6 Pedlar's Corner

Page 7 Memory Configurations for the Amiga

Page 9 Software Spotlight
Page 9 Members' Micro Mart

Page 10 News

Page 10 Commodore Network Disks

Page 11 Profile - Leonie Parsons

Page 12 Cyber-Art Computer Show

Page 13 Latest News from the Magazine Library

MEMBERSHIP FEES - Visitors Welcome

\$35 per year Family Membership \$3 VISITOR (family - includes FREE Newsletter)

BENEFTIS OF MEMBERSHIP

Monthly newsletter mailed to all members.

* Pedlar's trading table selling recycled computer wares and blank 3 1/2" and 5 1/4" disks at competitive prices.

* Magazine Library - Magazines are available for

members to borrow.

* Access to the club's extensive C64 & Amiga PD libraries - club disks available at meetings for only \$2 each.

* Help is available to assist in solving problems.

* Computers for members' use.

* Monthly demonstrations

JULY DEMONSTRATIONS

C64 - GeoCanvas by Paul Price Amiga Corner - A look at CD Encyclopedia C64/Amiga Corners

COMMITTEE FOR 1994/95 CLUB YEAR

PRESIDENTSECRETARY	
SECRETARY'S ASSISTANT	Jim Davies
EDITOR	Dorothy Millard
C64/128 LIBRARIAN AMIGA LIBRARIANS	Brett Eden &
PEDLAR/DISK SALES	Darryl Hunter
MAGAZINE LIBRARIAN	
COMMITTEE MEMBER	

COMMITTEE MEMBER..... Leoni Parsons

In this edition of MCCC News you will see an advertisement from The Rotary Club of The Basin about Cyber-Art '94, which is to be held on 8th & 9th October at the Bayswater Community Centre. It sounds like it will be a very interesting

day for all computer enthusiasts. Your committee haven't had an opportunity yet to discuss where the club stands with regard to involvement, but if you have any ideas or would like to be involved, please talk to a committee member. In the meantime put the date in your diary.

I would like to get a discussion going on the future direction of the club. Do you think it should be a C64/128 only group. Should we stay the same with two demonstrations supporting the C64 and the Amiga? Should we let other computer enthusiasts in, i.e. PC or Apple users? Are we losing members to the PC? What do you think? I would prefer you write a letter to the Editor on this matter, but if you don't want your views published then let me know at the next meeting.

To get the ball rolling I will pubish my views (note these are not the views of the committee). I think we should continue supporting the C64 and the Amiga. I also think we should allow in PC enthusiasts in order to retain and hopefully encourage members who use these machines. This is a controversial and purely a personal point of view. Do you think this would cause problems with demonstrations. If so, perhaps we should rethink the way we operate on club evenings. Are the demonstrations obsolete and should we just have "corners" where individuals show various aspects of their machines,

with an opportunity for other club members to interact?

Please take the time and trouble to jot down your thoughts and forward them to me. I am writing this to provoke discussion in the face of declining memberships over a number of years. Obviously computing needs change and what people expect from their club also changes. Machines are getting bigger and bigger and less people are writing programs, whereas in the "early days" a lot of help required by members was in the area of programming. Most help given now is on how to set up equipment, use of printers, what you can do with software and, for the C64 in particular, where to obtain suitable programs.

I look forward to hearing from as many members as possible. Until next time.....



The

WON THE RAFFLE YET? You have to be in it to win it.
Tickets available at the membership table. 20c each of 6 for 51

Programming

Freeze a Listing

Using the C64 and being a programmer, I have found that there is no facility on it to temporarily "freeze" a program scroll while it is being LISTed to the screen. This means that you have to try to see what is going on while the listing glides gracefully upwards before your very eyes.

Recently I came across the following short program which fixes this. The C64 has a small unused block of memory between locations 679 and 767, just right for a small machine-code routine. There is also a vector at address 774 which is used when BASIC LISTs a program, and a flag at address 653 to detect when the SHIFT, CTRL or the COMMODORE keys are pressed. By combining all these wonderful pieces of information, the following routine was produced to perform the required function.

To add the LIST freeze facility to your C64 you just load and run the following small listing, and the facility will be installed automatically...... Dorothy



10 FOR C = 679 TO 686 : READ A

20 POKE C,A: NEXT C

30 POKE 687, PEEK (774) : POKE 774, 167

40 POKE 688, PEEK (775): POKE 775,2

50 DATA 72,173,141,2 60 DATA 208,251,104,76



Dealer Directory

McGILLS AUTHORISED NEWSAGENCY

187 Elizabeth St., Melbourne (602-5566) COMPUTER BOOKS DISCOUNT 10%



NOVO COMPUTER HARDWARF, 049-201102 P.O. Box 237 Mayfield, NSW, 2304 MEMBER DISCOUNT

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(663-3951)
Computer Books
(Not Magazines)
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MAXWELL OFFICE EQUIPMENT

162-164 Nicholson St., Abbotsford (419-6811) 10% DISCOUNT ON SOFTWARE

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62 Charter St, Ringwood (870-4844) All Commodore Computers Serviced 10% DISCOUNT ON LABOUR CHARGE

PRESTON ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS

217 High St., Preston (484-0191) 10% DISCOUNT

TO OBTAIN THE STATED DISCOUNT YOU SHOULD PRODUCE YOUR CURRENT CLUB MEMBERSHIP CARD

A Chat with the President



Welcome to another month at the MCCC. I am not at all sure what my subject will be this month, but I hope a short review of things that have happened over the month will lead to a theme of some sort by the end of the piece!

I remember that last month's meeting at Nunawading was particularly busy and exciting, thanks to the "cutting edge" team of enthusiasts from the Hills group. We saw how the internal hard drive in an old IBM laptop, with the right software, could be put to use as a cheap storage device for the C64. What better use than this for the computer we love to hate? Not all the frills and compatibility of a new CMD hard drive, but the price is right! We had several new faces at the meeting, and I hope we will see them again, hopefully as new members. I realise that some of our C64 members come to us to solve much more basic questions than how to connect an IBM hard drive to their computer, but it is still inspirational to see how people are finding ways to push at the boundaries of what is possible. Meanwhile, if you are still wondering how to format a 1541 disk, or print out a disk directory, there are ordinary mortals like myself who can help you. Please ask at a meeting if you are having problems, and if the problem concerns a piece of hardware that not everyone owns (say, a printer or cartridge) then try to bring it along.

With all the C64 activity, our Amiga owners had to take a back seat at the July meeting, although Brett and Darryl had a machine set up and were only too happy to talk with other owners. In August we will be back to having an Amiga demonstration at the meeting, and of course Brett will be able to show interested people his many Gigabytes of Amiga PD software for sale.

Amongst the enquiry calls I receive each month, there are usually a few from people having trouble with GEOS. I think the reason I receive them is because the caller has first rung Dorothy, and she is not exactly a GEOS enthusiast! The calls are of two basic types. The first has acquired a GEOS system disk without an instruction manual,

and doesn't know what it's supposed to do. ("This GEOS game won't play!") The other type knows what it's supposed to do, but can't get it to perform as advertised. As the main GEOS applications are meant to print something to paper in the end, this quite often means a printer driver problem. But I am amazed that people persist in using Geowrite as their main word processor while using a single disk drive and no form of Ram expansion - I'm sure I would have given up long ago!

People who want to see what GEOS can do using more than the minimum equipment should come to the August meeting, when Paul Price will demonstrate the latest graphics (drawing) program called Geocanvas. This has resizable drawing windows, choice of number and type of tools, and the ability to work on more than one document at once (amongst other things). Paul will be working with two drives and a Ram expansion unit. I don't suppose Dorothy or the other Amiga people will be impressed, but for us low-tech reactionaries, this is the kind of thing that makes our old computers hum along. GEOS may be a hard system to learn, and it may be hungry for hardware to work quickly (remind anyone of IBM?) but it allows the C64/128 to do things and produce printed output that can't be done in any other way. And it is supported by MOUNTAINS of third party utilities, artwork, fonts, and whole new applications, (like Geocanvas).

I have a feeling that the theme I hoped would develop is still pretty well hidden, and my space is coming to an end. Looks like the same old Bernie ramblings to me! Well if you want literature look in the rest of the newsletter! Next month I may get around to writing a review of something. Why don't you do the same? I'm sure Dorothy would love to be snowed under with lots of stuff to print - and it's certain to be more entertaining than mine.



Bye for now, Bernie.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

There are ten differences between the top and bottom pictures. Can you spot them?









\$\$\$\$\$ PEDLAR'S CORNER \$\$\$\$\$

Make yourself some money and sell your supersceded computer wares at Pedlar's Corner. Bring goods to be sold along around 7.00 p.m. and pick up anything left around 9.15 p.m.

Please complete a form detailing the goods to be sold and price. Forms are available from Pedlar and are printed periodically in the newsletter. Please also ensure that goods are labelled with your name and the price required. Note a commission of 10% is payable to the club.



Memory Configurations for the Amiga by Michael Allen

The following article has been reprinted from OUTPUT, May/June, 1994, with thanks.

There are two different ways in which your memory is used on the Amiga. Chip memory is interfaced to the DMA (Direct Memory Access) bus, allowing it to be accessed directly by the CPU or any of the custom chips. Because of this direct access, it is often slower than Fast RAM. Fast RAM can be accessed only by the CPU. The amount of Chip memory you can add to your Amiga is determined by your Agnus chip. Older A500s can only access 512k of Chip RAM. Later versions of Agnus allowed 1 or 2MB of Chip RAM to be added.

It is worth remembering that although most people think it is much better to have Chip RAM in preference to Fast RAM, this is not always the case. Although the Chip RAM is used for DMA operations and storing samples, Fast memory can speed up many of your Amigas operations. Even 1 MB is enough room for drive and device buffers that benefit greatly from being in Fast RAM.

The reason for this is that Fast RAM is only accessed by the CPU, so the processor doesn't have to wait around for the custom chips to have their turns with the RAM Device buffers and caches which can be one of three types: Chip, Fast or Public. These days most buffers

are defined as Public, which just means that the system can use whatever memory it has to hand. In most cases this will be Fast RAM.

Chip RAM

All new Amigas are capable of having 1MB of Chip RAM, which is fitted as standard. Older sound samplers and most art packages are limited by the amount of continuous Chip RAM they can access. This is because they use the graphics (Agnus or Alice) or the sound (Paula) chips, ability to address the chip RAM directly to perform some tasks.

Some utilities, either provided with Workbench or available from Public Domain libraries, help make the most effective use of your memory. The most useful of these is FastMemFirst, which forces programs to use Fast memory in preference to Chip memory.

Another useful utility is called Degrader. This can effectively "knock out" blocks of memory to make your machine more compatible with older Amigas.

All memory which is added externally to the Amiga is Fast memory. There are mary different types of Fast RAM expansion available, but most of them involve the trapdoor slot on the A1200.

Under the trapdoor

The trapdoor slots on the A500, A500+, A600 and A1200 are one area used by most third party manufacturers as a path to add expansion memory.

Depending on which Amiga you have, vast amounts of memory can be added in this way. Even the humble A500 can have 4MB added in this way, although this does require so me hard ware modification.

RAM is usually added to the A1500 and A2000 by a Zorro card.

Because of their versatile design, almost any memory package is catered for. The main types of memory packages available are DIPs (Dual In-line Package), ZIPs (Zig-zag In-line Packages) and SIMMs (Single In-line Memory Module). All have their advantages and disadvantages, but mostly the preference is dictated by which is currently the cheapest, due to the fluctuating world demand.

Expansion port add ons for the A500 and A500+, such as hard drives, often feature the ability to add extra Fast RAM. The Commodore A590 does so by way of DIPs, while the GVP HD8+ uses SIMMs. There are still a few memory expansions available for this port. The

Memory Configurations for the Amiga by Michael Allen (Continued.....)

best of which is probably the SupraRAM expansion, which can use a separate power supply and also has a through port to allow other units to be attached.

32-bits

Memory for the A4000 or the A1200 should be 32-bit wide memory, which is more expensive but much faster than the 16-bit memory used by older Amigas.

There are a number of different memory expansions for the A1200. Some of them feature extra components such as maths co-processors or accelerator chips. These are expensive but potentially useful options, as they will greatly increase the speed with which your computer is able to perform many operations.

Accelerator cards for the older Amigas often include the ability to add 32-bit RAM as well. This will greatly improve the performance of the machine. If this is our only RAM expansion though, and you also have a hard drive fitted, it is probably

worth configuring at least some of the memory as normal Amiga Fast RAM. The reason for this is that the drive buffers on the older (non-AGA) machines, cannot be allocated to 32-bit RAM, because it doesn't fall into the standard Amiga memory map.

Speed

Memory itself can have different speeds. This can make quite a difference to memory intensive processing tasks such as animation and video work. Access times for an average memory device would be around 100ns, but specialist memory devices can be as fast as 20ns.

This type of RAM is very expensive and is used normally in specialist devices like 24-bit display cards and video digitisers. Generally, you will find that ZIP packages are faster than SIMM modules, which are faster than DIP packages.

Faults

It is very unusual for memory devices to develop faults. Thankfully they are the type of things, like windows, which either work or don't work. The danger period is when you are installing or removing memory. The chips are very susceptible to static damage, so it is very important to earth yourself (by touching a radiator or earthed appliance) before touching the RAM card. In fact, if you can avoid it, try not to touch the actual memory chips at all.

If a fault does occur, the only thing to do is replace the chip. In a 5MB SIMM module, this is an unfortunate occurrence. Because of the way that the multitasking operating system needs to use memory in blocks all over the place, it may be some time before you are able to pin down the fault.

There are a few software programs that will check out the integrity of your memory, and they are usually supplied with the memory boards themselves. Note that although the PD program SysInfo will tell you how your memory is configured, it doesn't actually test it.





C64 Club Disk

Due to illness details of the August C64 Club Disk were not available at the time of publication. However, look out for it at the meeting when it will be demonstrated, and details will be published next month for those who are unable to attend the meeting. Cost of disks ONLY \$2 each.

Amiga PD Library

The club has access to CDs containing Fred Fish disks, Music Modules for Soundtracker, Workbench Utilities, Scope PD disks, JAM (Just Amiga) disks, 17-BIT and MUCH, MUCH more. Whatever you're looking for, talk to our Librarians, Brett Eden or Darryl Hunter, who will be happy to help you. Cost of disks is ONLY \$2 each.

Tea and coffee is available free of charge at each meeting in the kitchen, which is opposite the entrance.

Please help yourself and when finished wash, dry and put away your cup. Thank you.



MEMBERS MICRO MART



Members' Ads. relating to computing are free in the newsletter.

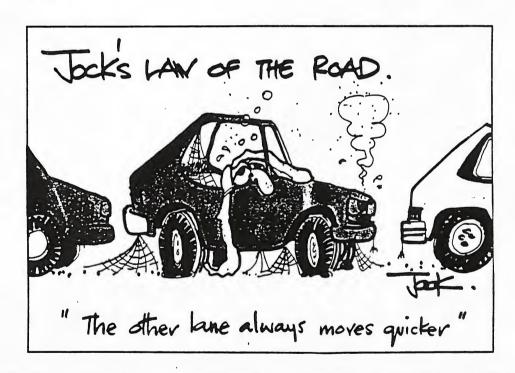


Commodore Voice (formerly Friendz and Contax) has now ceased publication. I have been informed that all members will be advised and subscriptions will be refunded, although this may take a while. Also if you have ordered the Fun Graphics Machine or The Write Stuff, orders will be honoured.

Commodore Network, the specialist C64/128 Australian magazine, is now available at club meetings. Pick up your copy early to ensure you don't miss out.

Magazines - I am informed by our magazine librarian that he has recently received a new batch of magazines, which are now available to borrow.

GeoCanvas v3.0 (the subject of this month's demonstration) - I noticed in this month's Commodore Network that GeoCanvas v3.0 is being offered by Novo Computer Hardware to Commodore Network readers for a mere \$36 - normally \$55. Another good reason to pick up a copy of Commodore Network.



Commodore Network Disks

If you purchased the Commodore Network Magazine, disks are now available. You can choose one free from Applications, Utilities, Entertainment and 128.

See Bob Morrow to obtain your free disk.



The profile segment has been introduced, to firstly introduce general club members to their committee, and later on to let you get to know other club members and their interests. Over the course of the next few months you may be asked to complete a Profile Form. No information will be included that you do not wish and there will be no pressure to complete one if you prefer not to.

Name: Leonie Parsons

Computer(s) Owned:

- * Commodore 128D
- * Commodore 64

Other Equipment Owned:

- * Citizen 5800 Printer
- * 1541 II Disk Drive
- * Taxan Super Vision Monitor

What do you use your computer for?

Since I've had my C128D (for the last couple of years) the C64 has not been used much physically, but I use the 128D in 64 mode quite a lot, mainly for playing games and using Printshop etc. My children (and me!) enjoy playing games in 64 mode.

My 128D I use mostly for word processing (I use The Write Stuff which is a wonderful program). I hope to begin using it soon with a modem, which has very kindly been lent to me, and to investigate bulletin boards etc. I also play the odd game or two on the 128D. I really enjoy working on my 128D - it is a terrific computer and I feel privileged to have it.

I enjoy messing about with Printshop and Printshop graphics in 64 mode.

My children use the 128D for doing school projects etc.

How long have you been interested in computers?

For approximately seven years which I bought my C64 at K-Mart. Then I was lucky enough to have my 128D fall into my lap so to speak, a few years later.

How long have you been a member of the MCCC?

Approximately three and a half years, I think - it's been a while.

Family:

I have two children, Eve 14 and Amy 10. My husband is not interested in computers.

Other hobbies:

My children and I all roller-skate - we all skated competitively until about a year ago when I decided not to compete anymore. I still skate socially - I do figures and dance. We are going to Brisbane in August for my daughter Eve to compete in the Australian Roller skating Championships.

I enjoy TV (especially Seinfeld), cinema, theatre, opera and the arts in general.

I enjoy wandering around the city with my children having a good time and seeing the sights.

Any other information:

I recently joined the club's committee and I am enjoying that.

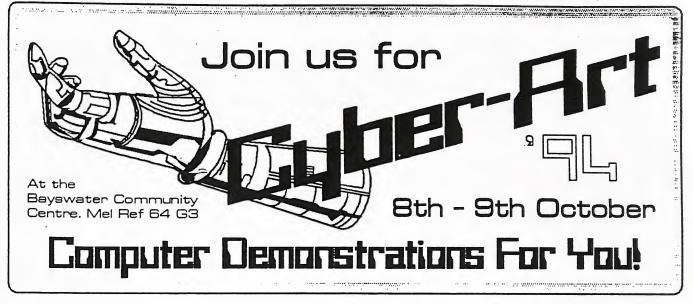


The Rotary Club of The Basin (Inc).

Invites you to

P.O. Box 35 Boronia. 3155.

Ph (03) 762 6419 Fax (24 Hrs) 761 0421



Concept.

Our aim is put the emphasis of the show on users of computers rather than the suppliers of hardware, although a balance of commercial displays will be represented to help cover costs. This will give user's the opportunity to demonstrate their creative skills to others.

Background.

Rotary is a world-wide organisation of business and professional people who provide humanitarian aid in both the local and world community, and encourage high ethical standards in all vocations. This of course means our Club has a high level of interest in computers as well as a need to raise funds for local community projects, national projects, as well as International aid programs. It was from these interests that the idea of a computer art show evolved.

Displays and Demonstrations.

Creativity and adaption of available software to suit the purposes of individual requirements that are of interest to the general public and have good visual impact. Such areas of interest would include: Desk-top publishing, animation and video work, music, creative art, programming, robotics, logo's etc, and other computer based activities that the committee may consider to be of public interest. A decision will be made on the merits of the applicants submission to the committee, time share of displays will be accepted if exhibitors produce a schedule of activities for their stand and that is made available for early publication. It is important that all displays and demo's be manned at all times. This show is about what you can do with what you have got, not necessarily the latest or most expensive equipment available. Videos may be used to outline or summarize a demonstration.

Feature Attraction.

The Show Planning Committee has tentatively booked the very latest in VIRTUAL REALITY technology available to us as a feature of the show. An additional charge over and above the admittance fee will be payable for an experience on this machine.

How Can You Help Us?

Firstly by being there! Secondly by providing us with potential sponsors, exhibitors and your creative ideas on the content that this exhibition should contain.

Contact: Day, George Leake 762 1187. Evenings, David O'Regan 762 6419

Magazine Library

by Grant Davies

FORMAT

COMPUTE!

I would like to remind veteran members, and inform new members, of what is available at the club's magazine library. At present, the club owns hundreds of different computer publications dating back as far as 1982. There is also newsletters from other Australian Commodore clubs in the library. Recently, Ivan Blitz has kindly donated many, many more magazines to fill some gaps we have. Thank you Ivan.

I had a Commodore 64 set up at the magazine table, with all the magazine records on it. I am now changing the program to Amiga so the Commodore 64 won't be returning to the table for that purpose. I wrote the program for the Commodore 64 to handle borrowing, returning, deciding which magazines to take to the meeting, along with vital information about the magazines.

When I first started writing the Amiga version of this program, I thought "Okay, this Amiga has sixteen times the memory capacity of the 64, so I'll be able to fit all the magazine records of every magazine that the club owns plus the contents in its memory - just like Nunawading Library, next door. Hey! The Amiga really is as powerful as those IBM thingies!" So, I did my calculations and came to the conclusion that I would need about five megabytes of memory to do what I wanted. Alright, fine. Obviously, this required some serious packing! I considered using a hard disk

immediately, where the difference in speed between memory and storage wouldn't be missed too much, but I decided there must be a way to shove it all in there. It was plain I couldn't be lax about the room I allotted for each magazine's name and information.

Originally, I wanted to reserve a certain amount of memory for each record, and this created the problem. Some magazines have virtually nothing interesting to read in them, whereas others are jammed packed with useful ideas. If I gave the ones with nothing useful the same amount of memory as the ones with lots of useful things, I would run out of memory very quickly. (If I had decided to drop the idea of putting the contents of the magazines on computer as well, it would be easy to put everything in memory). You could think

modes: Insert and Overwrite.
Originally, I wanted to operate in overwrite mode, saving every character in every line in every column, regardless of the fact that the document only used about one quarter or one eighth of this room.

of it like an editing

program with two

I could now do one of two things: either do what most editing programs do in overwrite mode and pack the data, or I could switch to insert mode, and only save what is necessary. I opted for the latter. This will mean a certain speed reduction when editing the data, but it should run just as fast when being used after all the data has been typed in. At the moment, I am in the early stages of making the program, and goodness knows when it will be finished as I am working on programming some sport management games as well. I am hoping the final product will work in much the same way as

public library computers do, with the club members being able to type in an article or topic they want, and the database searching its records for the requested information.

The next problem of course is setting up an Amiga 500 at the table. Looks like I've got some serious arguing ahead of me as the car is already full on meeting nights with magazine and secretarial stuff!!

Melbourne Commodore Computer Club Inc.

If undeliverable return to:

P.O. Box 177, BOX HILL, VIC. 3128.

C LUB MEETING DATES FOR 1994/95

12th January, 1994. 9th February, 1994. 9th March, 1994. 13th April, 1994. 11th May, 1994. 13th July, 1994. 10th August, 1994. 14th September, 1994. 12th October, 1994. 9th November, 1994. 14th December, 1994. 11th January, 1995 8th February, 1995. 8th March, 1995.

Please Note:

All club meetings are on the second Wednesday of each month in the Courtyard Room, Nunawading Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading. The meeting room is available between 7-11 p.m.